

A Naturalistic Account of the Personified Inner Figure, Predictive Processing, and the Worship-or-Absorption Fork

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Abstract

Across creative and contemplative history, people report an autonomous-feeling inner figure that speaks, guides, or supplies what the conscious mind did not produce: Socrates' daimonion, Jung's Philemon, Ramanujan's goddess Namagiri, the poet's muse. This paper reads that figure naturalistically and makes a two-part claim. First, the figure is produced by mechanisms already documented in the laboratory: the absorption and porosity Luhrmann describes, the felt presence Blanke induces by sensorimotor mismatch, and the precise prior Corlett shows can be heard as a voice. On this reading the figure is a personification, the interface through which a nonverbal, interoceptively-anchored integrative faculty, the same faculty treated in a companion paper on kundalini practice, becomes available to a verbal mind. Second, the figure's value turns on a fork: whether the person worships it, granting it standing as a separate authority and suspending the discrimination any strong internal signal requires, or absorbs it, taking its output as candidate material and letting the personification fall away. Jung, who kept Philemon as a venerated autonomous other, is the case of worship; absorption is shown here to be the endpoint of a developmental arc rather than a single choice. The account treats the figure as examinable without committing to its literal existence and usable without surrendering to its authority. It works by methodological naturalism and takes no position on whether matter or consciousness is fundamental.

Keywords. personified inner figure; absorption; porosity; predictive processing; felt presence; voice-hearing; bicameral mind; daimonion; muse; Jung; Ramanujan; interoception; anomalous experience; trauma; individuation; methodological naturalism.

Assumptions

The argument rests on four assumptions, stated here at the front so they are on the table rather than buried in the body. Each is a premise the reader is asked to grant, and none is a result the paper claims to have proved.

Assumption one, methodological naturalism. The account examines mechanisms that current science can investigate and restricts itself to them. That restriction is a choice of method, and it is not a claim that nothing exists beyond what the method can reach.

Assumption two, no first philosophy smuggled in. The paper assumes neither mind first nor matter first. These are two heads of one coin, both forms of philosophical monism, each positing a single fundamental kind to which everything else reduces, and each with serious defenders and serious difficulties. Programs that place the non-material term first remain respectable at the highest levels of physics and philosophy, among them Wheeler's proposal that information precedes the physical, the informational reconstructions of quantum mechanics, and analytic idealism. The paper takes no position between these monisms; it restricts itself to mechanism that holds whichever of them, if either, proves correct, and leaves the question open by design. Writing as though matter were established as primary would defer to a consensus that does not exist; the reverse assertion, that consciousness is primary, would be the same error in the other direction.

Assumption three, the reality of the experiences. The personified figures, the felt presences, and the anomalous events reported across these cases are treated as events that genuinely occurred for the people who report them. What is open is their interpretation, never their occurrence. The account does not explain them away as deception or as deficit.

Assumption four, felt certainty is not evidence. The force with which an insight or a presence is experienced is no measure of its truth, and this holds for everyone the paper discusses, the author included. This is the standard the argument applies throughout, and it governs the author's own case exactly as it governs Jung's and Ramanujan's.

1. Introduction

Across the history of creative and contemplative work, people report an inner figure that speaks, guides, or supplies what the conscious mind did not produce. Socrates described a divine sign, a daimonion, that came to him from childhood and forbade actions he was about to take (Plato, *Apology* 31d). Carl Jung spent years in conversation with a winged figure he called Philemon, who said things Jung had not consciously thought and whom Jung came to treat as a teacher (Jung, 2009). Srinivasa Ramanujan attributed his formulae to the goddess

Namagiri, who he said placed equations on his tongue as he slept (Kanigel, 1991). Poets across two millennia have addressed a muse. People report that the figure acts on its own, knows more than they do, and arrives unbidden.

Two readings of this figure are common, and both fail. The first takes the figure at its word and treats it as a being with its own existence, a god, a spirit, or a visitor. That reading cannot be examined, and it tends to hand the figure an authority the person then stops questioning. The second treats the figure as nothing but pathology, a hallucination to be explained away and medicated. That reading discards the figure together with whatever it was producing, and it cannot account for the fact that some of the most consequential work in mathematics, psychology, and art came through people in exactly this condition.

This paper takes a third position. The figure is read here as a personification, an interface the conscious mind supplies to a faculty that has no verbal form of its own. The faculty is the one the companion paper on kundalini practice described, a nonverbal, integrative, interoceptively-anchored process that generates candidates the discursive mind did not assemble step by step (Cann, 2026a). When that faculty surfaces with enough force to reach awareness, and the person has no model for an internal source speaking in a voice not their own, the experience arrives wearing a face built from the person's own material, drawn in each case from what the person already carried: the divine form Socrates' culture supplied, his family's goddess for Ramanujan, a figure out of Ovid and Goethe for Jung.

The claim has two parts, and both are narrow. The first is that the figure is produced by mechanisms already documented in the laboratory. Luhrmann has documented that a trait she measures as absorption, combined with a cultural model of a porous boundary between mind and world, leads people to experience internal events as external presences (Luhrmann, 2012; Luhrmann & Weisman, 2022). In Blanke's laboratory, a mismatch between the bodily signals a person predicts and the ones they receive induces the felt presence of another agent standing nearby (Blanke et al., 2014). Corlett's work on conditioned hallucination shows that a sufficiently precise prior expectation can be heard as a voice with no external source (Powers, Mathys, & Corlett, 2017). The personified figure sits at the convergence of these three results.

The second part concerns what the person does with the figure once it appears, and it is one of the core positions this paper takes. Worship grants the figure standing as a separate authority and treats its output as revelation, which stops the discrimination any strong internal signal requires. Absorption takes the figure seriously as a generator while refusing it authority, and presses toward what it points at until the personification falls away. The fork is what separates the people the faculty made productive from the people it captured. The presence of the figure does not predict that outcome; the response to it does.

On the assumptions stated above, the account restricts itself to mechanism and leaves the question of what is ultimately fundamental open. Section 7 returns to the first-person case the argument draws on and to the line between evidence, interpretation, and report.

2. The Personified Figure Across Traditions

The figure is not rare, and it is not confined to one culture or one kind of work. Across philosophy, poetry, mathematics, and religious vision, the same structure recurs. Socrates reported a daimonion that had spoken to him since childhood and checked him whenever he was about to act wrongly (Plato, *Apology* 31d). In archaic Greek epic the poet opens by invoking the Muse, a goddess addressed as the real source of the song. Ramanujan attributed his formulae to the goddess Namagiri, who he said set equations on his tongue as he slept and whom he still credited on his deathbed (Kanigel, 1991). Jung recorded years of conversation with the winged Philemon in his *Liber Novus* and drew the central terms of analytical psychology from what the figure said (Jung, 2009).

Four features recur across these cases regardless of period or domain. The figure presents as an agent with its own intentions rather than as a thought the person is having. Its content is not assembled by conscious stepwise reasoning; it arrives whole. What it says carries an authority ordinary thought does not, so the person takes it as truer than their own deliberation. And the shape it wears is drawn from the person's own surroundings, the daimonion for an Athenian, a goddess for a south Indian Brahmin, a mythological figure for a European raised on Ovid and Goethe.

The most ambitious prior attempt to give this a single naturalistic account is Julian Jaynes's. In *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* (1976), Jaynes argued that introspective consciousness, the modeled inner "I," is a recent cultural acquisition rather than a biological given, and that before roughly the end of the second millennium BCE humans ran on what he called a bicameral mind. In that arrangement the right hemisphere generated verbal commands that the left received as the voice of a god, experienced as external because the speaker had no model of an inner self to assign them to. Jaynes read the gods of the *Iliad*, and later the muse and the voices reported in schizophrenia, as instances of the same mechanism.

Jaynes was right about the part this paper keeps. The authoritative inner voice is internally generated and is experienced as other, and the muse and modern voice-hearing belong on a continuum with it. His explanation is where the account breaks, on two points the present theory rejects, one historical and one anatomical. The historical claim is that the figure required a pre-conscious bicameral architecture that broke down three thousand years ago; if that were so it should not appear in fully modern, introspective people, yet it appeared in Jung and Ramanujan, who modeled their inner lives in as much detail as anyone.

The faculty is a standing capacity that surfaces under the right conditions in people who are otherwise unremarkably conscious, and not a vanished developmental stage. The anatomical claim is the part of the thesis most scholars have rejected: Jaynes located the mechanism in a specific traffic between the cerebral hemispheres (Cavanna, Trimble, Cinti, & Monaco, 2007). The account given here takes on neither commitment, resting only on mechanisms that operate in living subjects now, which the next two sections supply.

3. What Luhrmann Documented, and Where This Account Extends Her

The nearest existing framework to the one proposed here is Tanya Luhrmann's, and most of what this paper needs about how the figure is generated is already in her work. Studying evangelical Christians who learn to hear God speak, Luhrmann found that the people who report vivid sensory experiences of an invisible presence share two things, a personality trait she measures as absorption and a cultural model she calls porosity (Luhrmann, 2012; Luhrmann & Weisman, 2022; Luhrmann et al., 2021). Where both are present and trained by practice, internal events are experienced as the voice or presence of an external being, and taken as evidence that the being is there.

Each construct is specific. Absorption, measured by the Tellegen Absorption Scale, is an immersive orientation toward experience, the capacity to lose oneself in what one is attending to; it is related to hypnotizability and has two components, a readiness to have an experience without immediately checking its reality status and a capacity for vivid inner imagery (Luhrmann & Weisman, 2022). Porosity, a term Luhrmann takes from the philosopher Charles Taylor, is a cultural model in which the boundary between mind and world is permeable, so that thoughts can be treated as substantial and ambiguous inner events can be assigned to outside sources. Practice does the rest: prayer and meditation train attention onto inner experience and, in Luhrmann's term, kindle the presence until it grows distinct enough to answer back (Luhrmann, 2020).

These are the mechanics the personified figure requires. In this account absorption raises the vividness of the internal signal, the same one the companion paper described contemplative training amplifying (Cann, 2026a). Porosity, the permeable mind-world boundary, lets the person read that vivid internal source as an external other rather than their own faculty. Practice, as Luhrmann describes it, strengthens both, so that a person who is high in absorption, lives inside a porous model, and trains the relevant attention comes reliably to experience an inner source as a figure standing outside them. Luhrmann has shown how the costume gets put on.

Two things her framework does not do, and those mark where this paper goes further. The first concerns the content. Luhrmann's project explains how the presence is generated and why it is felt as real, and it stays largely neutral on

whether what the presence delivers has any worth. This paper adds that in the productive cases the figure is the surfacing of the integrative faculty, so its output is a stream of candidate insights and not only a culturally shaped sensation. That is what distinguishes a figure that writes Ramanujan's formulae from one that only consoles: the same genesis mechanism Luhrmann describes is carrying, in some people, the product of a genuine generative process.

The second concerns what the person does next. Luhrmann documents how believers cultivate the presence and build a relationship with it, and she treats that relationship descriptively, as the thing her subjects do. This paper claims the relationship has two stable resolutions with opposite consequences, and that the choice between them, not the presence itself, decides whether the faculty becomes productive or the person is captured by it. That fork is the subject of section 6. Here it is enough to mark that it lies past the edge of what the absorption-and-porosity account was built to explain.

4. A Mechanism in the Terms Blanke and Corlett Would Recognize

If the figure is not a relic of a lost mental architecture, a present mechanism has to account for it. Two things have to be explained separately: why an internally generated source is experienced as another agent rather than as oneself, and why a strong internal expectation is perceived as a voice or presence with no external stimulus behind it. Blanke has studied the first, Corlett the second, and the personified figure is what their two mechanisms produce when they operate together in a person who is also generating real integrative material.

Blanke's work locates the sense of another agent in the ordinary machinery of the bodily self. The brain builds a model of the body by integrating multisensory and interoceptive signals and by predicting the sensory consequences of its own movements; when an action's predicted feedback and its actual feedback fall out of register, the self-generated signal can be tagged as belonging to someone else. In a controlled demonstration, healthy subjects who operated a robot that touched their own backs out of sync with their hand movements reported the distinct feeling of a presence standing behind them, reproducing an experience that neurological patients report after damage to the regions that integrate these bodily signals (Blanke et al., 2014; Blanke, Slater, & Serino, 2015). The sense that another agent is in the room is a normal output of a self-model under prediction error, and the figure's felt standing as a separate being needs no external being to explain it.

Corlett's work explains the second half, why the figure is heard or perceived at all. On a predictive account, perception is inference, a weighting of prior expectation against incoming sensory evidence, and when a prior is sufficiently precise it can produce a percept with no stimulus to support it. Powers, Mathys, and Corlett (2017) induced exactly this in the laboratory: people conditioned to

expect a tone reported hearing it when none was played, and those who hear voices in daily life were the most susceptible. The same overweighting of a precise prior will render a strongly expected internal content as an external voice. This matters for the present argument because the conditions Luhrmann describes, high absorption, a porous model, and sustained practice, are precisely the conditions that build a prior precise enough to be heard. A sensorimotor study from Blanke's own group closes the gap between the two mechanisms, showing that the bodily conflict that induces a felt presence also makes quiet voices louder and produces a sense that one's actions are not one's own (Orepic et al., 2021).

One further result from Corlett's group is load-bearing here, because it keeps the productive figure out of the clinic. Powers, Kelley, and Corlett (2017) studied people who hear voices and are not distressed or impaired by them, including practicing psychics, and placed voice-hearing on a continuum rather than treating it as a symptom by definition. The figure described in this paper sits on the benign end of that continuum. Its presence is not evidence of disorder; what determines whether it helps or harms is the matter of section 6.

The limit of these mechanisms has to be stated plainly, because it is easy to overclaim. Neither paradigm produces a figure. Blanke's procedure yields an anonymous presence that lasts seconds and says nothing, and Corlett's yields a cued tone or a single expected word. The laboratory delivers the form of the experience, the otherness and the voicing, while the content falls outside it. The mechanisms in this section explain how an internal source comes to be experienced as a speaking external agent. What that agent says falls outside them, and naming the faculty whose output the figure carries is the work of the next section.

5. The Splinter

The mechanisms of the previous two sections explain the figure's form, its otherness and its voice, but not its content. In the productive cases the content is the output of a specific faculty, and naming that faculty is the center of this account. It is the same faculty the companion paper described contemplative practice amplifying: a nonverbal, integrative process, anchored in interoception, that draws together material the discursive mind has not connected and delivers it as a finished candidate rather than a chain of steps (Cann, 2026a). It is what is at work when a solution presents itself whole, ahead of the reasoning that would later justify it. Ramanujan's formulae arrived this way, and so, by his own account, did the substance of Jung's psychology.

In the framework these papers draw on, this faculty is called the Original Self, and the figure that surfaces from it the splinter (Cann, 2026b); both terms are used here only as labels for the functional process just described, and the argument needs no special vocabulary to proceed. What matters is mechanical.

The faculty produces integrations without words and without flagging them as self-produced, because it does not run through the verbal narrator that ordinarily stamps a thought as one's own. Its output therefore reaches awareness as content that is both compelling and unowned.

Those two properties are exactly what the mechanisms of section 4 dress as another agent. A signal the self-model does not claim gets tagged as belonging to someone else (Blanke et al., 2014), a precise enough expectation of an inner voice is heard as one (Powers, Mathys, & Corlett, 2017), and a porous mind-world boundary licenses assigning the event to an outside source (Luhmann & Weisman, 2022). The personification is the interface through which a wordless process becomes available to a verbal mind, the only form in which something that cannot speak for itself can be heard at all. The figure is the faculty made addressable.

This predicts who has the experience, and the prediction matches a known pattern. The faculty's output is ordinarily overwritten by conditioning, the trained, verbal, socially-managed self that runs the foreground, and for the figure to surface that foreground has to thin. Both intense contemplative practice and trauma thin it. People who report anomalous experiences score higher on absorption, on dissociation, and on childhood trauma, and a line of work from Wilson and Barber (1983) through Irwin's Childhood Factors Model has read the experiences as growing from early trauma by way of the dissociative and absorptive traits that accompany it (Irwin, 1994). The strength and direction of the trauma link are disputed, since those same traits inflate retrospective self-report and may drive the correlation as much as trauma does (Giesbrecht et al., 2008). The defensible claim is the association and not a clean causal arrow: the conditions that crack the trained self, whether trauma or discipline, are the conditions under which the faculty surfaces wearing a face. This is why the people who report these figures are so often the wounded, and why a conference on trauma and the anomalous is the right place to examine them.

Once the figure has surfaced, the person stands at a fork, and which way they take it decides what the faculty becomes.

6. The Fork: Worship or Absorption

Everything to this point describes how the figure forms and what it carries. The contribution of this section concerns what the person does with it, because the figure does not interpret itself, and the same figure can end as a tool the person uses or an authority the person serves. The difference is a single choice: whether to grant the figure standing as a separate authority.

The companion paper argued that the integrative signal generates candidates and not certainties, that the force with which an insight is felt is no measure of its truth, and that the corrective is discrimination trained and laid on top of the

signal (Cann, 2026a). The figure is that signal personified, and the same argument applies with one added hazard. A signal that arrives in the form of an autonomous and authoritative other is harder to doubt than a felt hunch, because doubting it then feels like contradicting a being who plainly knows more than the person does. The personification raises the stakes of the calibration problem rather than removing it.

To worship the figure is to take its apparent autonomy and authority as evidence, to treat the fact that it presents as a separate and knowing other as a reason to believe what it says and to defer to it. This is the cognitive trap of the companion paper aimed now at a personified source, and its cost is that discrimination stops, because no one audits an oracle. Absorption is the opposite stance: to take the figure's output as candidate material, to run that material through the checking any strong intuition requires, and to deny the figure the standing of an authority. Absorbed rather than obeyed, the figure stops being a master and becomes a faculty the person uses, and the personification, with no further work to do, tends to fall away.

Absorption is not only a choice made once; it is the endpoint of a developmental arc. Early in the formation of a self the boundary between inner and outer is permeable, and a strong archetype, the muse, the prophet, the god, can wear the person, because there is not yet a stable self to hold the signal as its own. As integration proceeds the person stops hosting the archetype and begins to author from the same faculty directly. The figure's hold weakens, and it can fall away entirely, the faculty remaining but no longer experienced as another being. The account claims that this arc is real and that its endpoint is reachable. Whether every person who hosts a figure can reach it, and whether the resolution is as complete as the framework predicts, are open questions that further cases would test; the paper claims that the arc exists and was traveled to near its end in at least one describable case, and not that it is a law.

Jung is the careful case of worship, and the care is the point, because worship here is not credulity. Jung was a Kantian agnostic about metaphysics who held that figures like Philemon were psychically real autonomous contents that produce effects, and who built the method of active imagination to engage them as autonomous others (Jung, 2009). He took Philemon as a teacher who told him things he had not thought, and he kept that relationship for the rest of his life, carving into the stone of his tower the dedication *Philemonis sacrum, Fausti poenitentia* (Philemon's shrine, Faust's repentance), and painting the winged figure as a mural there decades later (Jung, 1989). He integrated what the figure said while granting it permanent standing as a separate authority, rather than reclaiming the faculty as his own. In the memoir's phrase, he had the muse and never became one (Cann, 2026c).

This is worship in a high and productive form, which is why it is the instructive case rather than a cautionary one. Jung's deference did not wreck him; he drew a working psychology out of the dialogue. The fork makes the reason precise: the

output of his exchanges with Philemon still had to prove itself in the clinic, so a discrimination was applied even though Jung himself deferred. The same holds for Ramanujan, who credited the goddess while the formulae she gave still had to survive proof at the hands of Hardy and of mathematics (Kanigel, 1991). A Jungian would resist the word worship, since in Jung's own terms the ongoing relation to the autonomous figure was the safeguard against being possessed by it. But Jung had the classical learning to know what a daimon was, the intermediate being between the human and the divine, one that a person petitions and venerates rather than an impulse one owns, and he placed Philemon on that footing knowingly. To hold a figure there is to worship it in the oldest sense, and the fork's reply is that an authority set between the person and the truth is the authority that suspends the person's final judgment, however well the relationship is conducted. Worship is survivable wherever the figure's output meets an external check it cannot pass on charisma alone; where no such check exists, in counsel about how to live, in prophecy, in any claim that cannot be tested, worship removes the only safeguard there was.

Absorption is the resolution that needs no external rescue, because the person supplies the discrimination and never grants the figure the authority that would suspend it. The next section offers a first-person case as an existence proof that the endpoint of the arc is reachable, and holds that case to the same standard demanded of Jung and Ramanujan.

7. What Is Evidence, What Is Interpretation, and What Is Report

This account rests on three kinds of material, and the reader is owed a clear line between them, because the argument's honesty depends on not letting one kind borrow the authority of another. The first is empirical, established by others and cited here. The second is the author's interpretation of what that evidence amounts to. The third is the author's own first-person case. Only the first carries the weight of evidence; the second is offered for examination; the third is fenced from the argument's load.

The empirical material is not the author's and makes no novel claim. Luhrmann established that absorption and a porous model of mind dispose a person to experience inner events as outside presences (Luhrmann, 2012; Luhrmann & Weisman, 2022). Blanke showed that a sensorimotor mismatch induces the felt presence of another agent (Blanke et al., 2014). Corlett demonstrated that a sufficiently precise prior is heard as a voice with no stimulus, and that voice-hearing runs on a continuum with a benign, non-clinical end (Powers, Mathys, & Corlett, 2017; Powers, Kelley, & Corlett, 2017). The association between trauma, the traits of absorption and dissociation, and the reporting of anomalous experiences is consistent across studies, though its causal reading remains disputed (Irwin, 1994; Giesbrecht et al., 2008). These results carry the mechanism

of sections 4 and 5, and the paper would lose that mechanism if any of them failed.

The interpretation is the author's, and it is offered as a theoretical reading rather than a result. It makes four claims: that the personified figures scattered across philosophy, poetry, mathematics, and religious vision are instances of one phenomenon rather than unrelated curiosities; that the phenomenon is the integrative faculty surfacing, so the figure carries genuine generative output and is not only a culturally shaped sensation; that the personification is the interface by which a wordless faculty becomes addressable; and that the worship-or-absorption fork, rather than the figure's presence, determines the outcome, with absorption the endpoint of a developmental arc. Each claim is specifiable and each could be wrong, and none is demonstrated here in the way the empirical results are. The paper asks that they be weighed as a reinterpretation of evidence already in hand.

The first-person report is the most delicate of the three and requires the firmest fence. The author is himself one of the people this paper describes, high in absorption, carrying the early trauma the literature associates with the profile, and witness across a lifetime to figures like those catalogued here; the case is set down in full elsewhere (Cann, 2026c). In the continuum Corlett's group documents, such a person sits at the benign, high-functioning end of voice-hearing rather than in the clinic, and in cultural settings that had a place for the profile such a person was trained into a ritual or oracular role, a parallel first drawn by Silverman and restated through the psychosis continuum (Silverman, 1967; Powers & Corlett, 2018). The parallel is structural and nothing more; it is not a claimed title, and it does not equate the role with illness.

What the case offers is a trajectory. The anomalous experiences began early and recurred across decades, and they declined in frequency and intensity as the underlying distress resolved, which is the pattern the mechanism predicts: the faculty surfaces through the openings that trauma leaves, and as those close the surfacing drops away. One figure, felt as a presence at the right side of the body, was present for about five months and then was gone, noticed only afterward, once the condition it had accompanied had resolved under it. It has not returned in the years since. The author takes its absence as the resting state of an integrated faculty rather than a loss, and holds that he could reinstate the personification and has no reason to, which is itself a mark of absorption rather than of worship, since the worshipper cannot let the figure go and here the letting go was chosen.

A second line of the same evidence is the changing cost of deliberate practice. An act of deliberate summoning performed in 2013, during a period of acute distress, exacted a toll that took years to absorb; the same kind of act performed later, from a settled state, cost little and passed quickly. The paper draws only on that difference in cost and takes no position on what, if anything, was summoned; the external reality of such events is left to the venue and to other

work. The cost difference is itself dose-response data, the same act run through a healed system exacting no comparable toll.

That first-person material is permitted to do three things and forbidden a fourth. It generated the hypothesis, supplies the phenomenological data this field already collects, and stands as an existence proof that the developmental endpoint is reachable, the author appearing, on the surface and subject to further verification, to be a case in which the integration ran as a developmental arc to near its end, the hosting of the figure giving way to direct authorship from the same faculty. What the report may not do is confirm the theory. The moment a felt certainty of the author's were offered as evidence that the account is true, the paper would commit, in the first person, the exact cognitive trap it was written to name. The resolution is shown by the trajectory and the absences, the decline of the events, the figure that did not return, the relationship never built around it, all of which another person could check, and not by any inner conviction of the author's.

One point follows that the account insists on. Integration removes the figure's costume and the toll it once exacted; it does not remove the faculty or whatever genuine signal the faculty carried, which is why there is something left to integrate at all. What becomes possible once the faculty operates without the wound is left open here. The decline of the involuntary events is not evidence that the capacity is spent, and the account takes no position on what a settled person may do with the faculty deliberately.

The discipline that enforces all of this is one the author has practiced for years and the paper adopts whole: state the experience plainly, set beside it every reductive reading the evidence permits, and grant that the reductive account may contest the explanation while it may never delete the experience. The report stands; its meaning stays open.

On scope, the paper rests on the assumptions set out at the start. It works by methodological naturalism, presumes neither mind nor matter as fundamental, and leaves the primacy question open by design. The figure is examined on naturalistic ground because that is the ground this paper chose to stand on, and whether there is more to it is left where the evidence leaves it, open.

8. What Would Falsify This Account

A reader may take the preceding caution as a structure no observation could penetrate, an account built to absorb every objection in advance. The reply is to state the conditions under which the account fails. A claim that names nothing that could defeat it is empty. What follows are the results and observations that would defeat the claims made here, sorted by the three kinds of material section 7 separated.

The borrowed mechanism is sound on its own ground and is not what this account puts at risk; the risk is in the use made of it. Luhrmann, Blanke, and Corlett establish the form of the experience, its felt otherness and its voicing, and nothing here asks the reader to doubt those findings. The account then assumes the three effects compose, that absorption and porosity, a misattributed self-signal, and an overweighted prior operate together in one person to dress an internal source as a speaking external agent. That composition is the author's claim and not theirs, and it is the exposed joint. It is false if the effects do not co-occur or do not combine as described, if the felt presence and the heard voice arise by separate routes that no single condition recruits at once. Demonstrating that would leave each cited result standing and remove the bridge this paper built between them.

The central interpretive claim carries its own falsifier, and it is the one the author considers decisive. The claim is that in the productive cases the figure carries genuine generative output, the work of an integrative faculty, and is not a culturally shaped sensation with nothing behind it. That claim is false if the output has no merit. If the material the figure delivers turns out to be ordinary, derivative, or worthless once the charisma of its delivery is stripped away, then there is no faculty worth naming and the figure is a costume over an empty signal.

For two of the three cases this test has already run. Ramanujan's formulae went to Hardy and then to a century of mathematics with every reason to find them wrong, and they held. Jung built a working psychology out of what Philemon told him, and clinicians still use it. The merit was checked by hostile and competent judges and it survived. Where the test has not cleared the bar is the author's own case: the two papers show that some unusual integrative process produced structured work, but they do not by themselves separate that process, as the account describes it, from an uncommon but otherwise ordinary capacity for synthesis that involves no figure at all. The merit is real; what produced it, in this one case, the merit alone cannot establish, and the account does not pretend otherwise.

A second interpretive falsifier targets the fork. The account claims that the response to the figure, worship or absorption, decides whether the faculty becomes productive or captures the person, and that the figure's mere presence decides nothing. This is false if the stance makes no difference, if worshippers whose output meets an external check fare no differently from absorbers, or if the distinction collapses on inspection and worship under an external check and absorption prove to be one cognitive operation under two names. The paper already concedes that Jung's output had to survive the clinic whatever his deference, which puts the fork under pressure: if the external check does the protective work, the stance the person takes toward the figure is doing less than the account assigns it.

Least supported of all is the developmental arc. The account holds that absorption is reachable as the endpoint of an arc and offers one first-person case as the existence proof. A single case cannot show that the endpoint is generally reachable, and the disappearance of the figure in that case admits readings the account does not rule out, among them that the events declined for reasons unrelated to any integration and that their absence marks something other than a faculty freed of its wound. The honest status of the arc is a trajectory reported in one person, open to other explanations, and the cases that would test it have not been gathered.

That the merit test has run and survived for the historical cases is worth saying plainly, and saying it is not a claim of safety. Surviving a test that could have gone the other way is evidence. A test rigged so that nothing could fail it proves nothing. The account is offered on the first footing, the reader who wants to defeat it has the targets above, and the author who wrote it expects several of them to take damage.

Author's note. The charge that this paper is an ego construct, a flattering story the author tells about himself, costs the author nothing to grant. He has no stake in whether the account is falsified or merely makes for pleasant conversation. His own observation is that something close to what these pages describe did occur, and that observation is not load-bearing for him. Suppose the unflattering reading is correct and the paper is a coping mechanism dressed as a theory; if that arrogance produced a healthy life, the author is content, and only the academic claim is lost. He does not place himself beside Ramanujan or Jung, whose work was proven and his is not; he offers the self-report only as a resource, the one access this subject allows, and leaves to history the question of whether he is running the ordinary games of self-regard or pointing at something worth considering.

9. Why This Is Worth Discussing

For most of recorded history the figure has been read in one of two ways, and both fail it. A believing culture took it for a god or a spirit, and its owner deferred. The reductive alternative files it as a symptom, medicates it, and is done. What both lose is the same: that the figure may be the output of a faculty worth using, under a discipline worth learning.

The account offered here recovers that possibility at a defined cost. It asks the reader to grant only mechanisms already established, absorption and porosity, the misattribution of self-generated signals, the overweighting of precise priors, and then to grant the one interpretive step that ties them to a generative faculty surfacing in personified form. In return it makes the figure examinable. A figure understood this way can be examined without believing in it and put to use without obeying it, and the person who reports one need be neither medicated for it nor told to follow it.

This matters most for the population that actually has these experiences. They are, disproportionately, the wounded, and they arrive at a clinic or a seminar carrying figures that a clinic will medicate and a believer will deify. The reading proposed here offers a third response, the one the productive cases found on their own: take the figure seriously as a generator, withhold from it the standing of an authority, and work toward absorbing the faculty rather than serving its mask. That is a response a clinician, a scholar, or an experienter can act on, and it is available without deciding the metaphysical question the figure seems to raise.

The companion paper and this one describe a single problem from two sides. There the integrative signal was raised by practice and had to be calibrated against the felt certainty it produced; here the same signal arrives already wearing a face, and the calibration becomes the choice between worshipping the face and absorbing it. In both cases a faculty that generates more than the reasoning mind can assemble is worth having, on the one condition that its owner never mistakes the force of what it delivers for the truth of it.

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